

REMARKS

Claims 41-69 are pending.

Claims 65 and 66 are objected to.

Claims 41-69 are rejected.

Claims 65 and 66 are amended.

Applicants request reconsideration of claims 41-69.

I. Objection to claims.

Per the Examiner's objection, claims 65 and 66 have been amended by changing the term "method" in their preambles to --system--.

II. Rejection of claims under §103

The Examiner rejected various groups of the pending claims as being obvious in light of various combinations of references. However, every combination cited relies on at least one of three references: European Patent 822,582 by Bhardwaj; U.S. Patent 5,989,345 by Hatano; and U.S. Patent 6,182,602 by Redeker. Applicants contend that the matters relied upon in these references is not prior art. Hence, all of the rejections fail.

Applicants emphasize that the current application benefits from the priority of its parent application, serial number 08/795,379 filed February 4, 1997. However, European Patent 822,582 by Bhardwaj did not publish until February 4, 1998. Similarly, U.S. Patent 5,989,345 by Hatano was not filed in the U.S. until April 30, 1998. U.S. Patent 6,182,602 by Redeker was not filed until May 29, 1997. Applicants note that Redeker's '602 patent is a continuation-in-part of U.S. Patent 6,170,428, filed by Redeker on July 15, 1996. However, all of the pending obvious rejections relying on Redeker's '602 patent cite text that does not appear in Redeker's '428 patent. (*Compare* U.S. Patent 6,182,602 by Redeker at col. 4, ln. 1-22 (cited by Office Action dated 6/6/3 at p. 4, 6, 7-8, 11, 12, 15, 17, 19) *with* U.S. Patent 6,170,428, by Redeker.) As a result, the matter in Redeker's '602 patent relied upon by the Examiner is "new matter" that does not benefit from the priority of Redeker's '428 patent.

Because (1) each of the Examiner's combinations relies upon matters in at least one of the references addressed above; and (2) the matters addressed above fail to predate the priority enjoyed by the current application; all of the obviousness rejections are untenable.

Conclusion

In light of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that the claims are allowable over the objection and applied references. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the Examiner's objection and rejections and further requests allowance of all of the pending claims. If there are any matters which may be resolved or clarified through a telephone interview, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney at the number indicated.

Respectfully submitted,



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